

NEWS RELEASE

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Agreement Requires Resignation of Land of Lincoln Goodwill Director and Assistant

Springfield, IL – The U.S. Attorney for the Central District of Illinois, Jan Paul Miller, announced final terms of pre-trial diversion agreements that require Larry Hupp and Debra J. Neece, Land of Lincoln Goodwill Executive Director and Assistant Executive Director, respectively, to resign their positions. Upon successful completion of the 18-month pre-trial diversion program by Hupp and Neece, the U.S. Attorney's Office has agreed that Hupp and Neece will not be prosecuted based on the investigation that resulted in the allegations against them. The U.S. Probation Office will supervise and monitor Hupp and Neece for compliance with terms of the agreements during the 18-month period.

U.S. Attorney Miller said, "Ensuring the best possible outcome for the developmentally disabled community served by the local Goodwill organization has been paramount in our efforts to resolve this matter in consultation with the Illinois Department of Human Services. These agreements hold accountable those responsible for failure to meet minimum training requirements and provide meaningful vocational rehabilitation services. Meanwhile, the Goodwill organization has the opportunity to move forward."

Maryam Mostoufi, Chief of the Bureau of Human Resources Development, Division of Developmental Disabilities, Illinois Department of Human Services, issued the following statement:

"No one should underestimate the importance of appropriately trained staff that are able to support individuals with developmental disabilities in achieving their maximum potential. Without the mandated basic training, direct support staff are unable to ensure the health, welfare and safety of all the individuals they support.

The Department of Human Services wishes to thank the U.S. Attorney and the Central Illinois Healthcare Fraud Task Force as well as all the individuals who came forward during the investigation. Their efforts resulted in Larry Hupp's and Debra Neece's admission of wrongdoing against the very individuals they were charged with supporting.

We are confident that a nationwide search for new leadership will result in Land of Lincoln Goodwill Industries once again providing the quality of services and support to individuals with disabilities that they were known for in the past."

(More)

In the pre-trial diversion agreement, Hupp admitted that under his direction, after he was notified of a pending state inspection, on March 31 and April 1, 2003, Goodwill employees altered records, created false records and made false statements to mislead state inspectors to believe that Goodwill had complied with minimum training requirements for its employees and others who provided direct services to individuals with developmental disabilities. In a separate agreement, Neece admitted that she assisted in the preparation and submission of the false reports. The application and training plan submitted by Hupp to the State of Illinois in October 2000 provided for at least 40 hours of classroom training and 80 hours of on-the-job training in the mandated areas.

Further, Hupp admitted he was responsible for the creation and submission of false records to the Office of Rehabilitation Services which resulted in the agency paying \$38,000 for services not provided in the period from June 2002 to April 2003. Under the Supported Employment Program, Goodwill provided vocational rehabilitation services or “job-coaching” to clients with significant mental or physical disabilities who had not obtained or maintained competitive employment. If the hours of services were not provided, Goodwill should not have represented they were, and was to reimburse the state of Illinois for any overpayment. In her agreement, Neece also admitted that she assisted in the preparation and submission of the false records.

The agreements became effective with the approval of the U.S. Probation Office on November 17, 2005. Terms of the agreement require that Hupp and Neece resign their positions at Land of Lincoln Goodwill. Further, Hupp and Neece may not seek employment with any agency which administers a program to assist developmentally disabled individuals that has received more than five percent of its gross revenue from the federal government in any year within the last 10 years.

The investigation was conducted by the Central Illinois Health Care Fraud Task Force which includes agents of the Illinois State Police’s Medicaid Fraud Control Unit, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Illinois Attorney General’s Office and the Illinois Department of Public Aid. Assistant U.S. Attorney Patrick D. Hansen and Assistant Attorney General Bradley K. Hart, assigned as a Special Assistant U.S. Attorney, coordinated the investigation.

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